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ABSTRACT

A model is outlined for providing reliable information on the effectiveness of teacher education programs for evaluation purposes. Six criteria for sound evaluation are established: (1) Evaluation should include opportunity possibilities for modification of the program; (2) Evaluation should include feedback from those active in the field of education; (3) To assess program effectiveness, longitudinal follow-up studies of graduates should be conducted; (4) Evaluation should include all personnel related to the program; (5) Care must be taken that all information received from sources connected with the program be reliable and comprehensive; and (6) An objective evaluation of the importance of the program must be maintained. (JD)

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A Model Approach to Evaluation of Teacher Education Programs

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Summary

Evaluation of our educative efforts is a component of each program. Our approach may be one of the few comprehensive and systematic models in operation. It represents advances in methodology, provides reliable and practical information for faculty and planners, and applies to a variety of evaluation problems.

The model has been designed to fulfill six objectives. (1) To provide for program modification, the model is cyclical, resulting in program adjustments which are then again evaluated. (2) To include field-based perspectives, the model centers on perceived needs and values of school personnel by contrast to program faculty. (3) To permit inferences about program impact, the model is longitudinal, following students from entry to exit and through early teaching experience. (4) To obtain complete input, the model embraces personnel in the field (principals and teaching graduates) as well as in the program (faculty and students). (5) To provide reliable information, the model operates on sound techniques of sampling, data collection--including personal interviews with all graduates--and analysis. (6) To provide for balance, the model examines the importance as well as the effectiveness of program activities as perceived by faculty, students, graduates, and principals.

The evaluation process is applied during a 12-month year by two professional and two clerical personnel with a total operating budget of

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fifty thousand dollars. The model itself is evaluated through the process and also by peer review of published papers.

The reaction of all participants has been uniformly positive and enthusiastic. Campus personnel take pride in the model, partly because of its dramatic contribution to accreditation and certification. Faculty are cooperative and find the reports stimulating. Only one single school administrator of nearly 200 contacted has refused cooperation. School personnel and teaching graduates are eager to share their views in the hope of improving the programs. A great deal of goodwill and field-program communication incidentally result.

The model can easily be adapted to evaluation of non-education programs, providing a possible expansion of the education unit in times of uncertainty and retrenchment. The model serves also for long-range planning and responsiveness to changing needs and populations. It is sound and useful, and it is inexpensive. The model is available to other institutions for the asking.

DAA Entry
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A Model Approach to Evaluation of Teacher Education Programs

Like all other teacher education units, the College of Education at Chicago State University needs a systematic and effective approach to evaluation of its programs. Evaluation is needed for two purposes: (1) to provide reliable information about the effectiveness of program efforts; and (2) to meet standards of certifying and accrediting agencies (e.g., NCATE Standard 6).

In developing our approach we aimed to design a comprehensive model that would be sound from the technical aspect, attractive to faculty, practical for planners, and relatively inexpensive for everybody. In the planning, we reviewed the evaluation literature, consulted colleagues, and did a lot of common-sense thinking. The model we came up with--and are continually modifying--has a number of unique or outstanding features. A recent reviewer called our approach the only comprehensive and systematic model in operation in the country.[1]

Objectives and Features

When we sat down to work out our approach, we had the advantage of seeing a number of deficiencies in the current practice of evaluation. We determined to improve upon these by setting an ideal objective for each component and then by making it a practical feature in our model. Here we describe six objectives, with the features we were able to incorporate.

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[1]Ferne K. Roberts, "A Review of Current Practices in Follow-up of Teacher Education Graduates." Unpublished manuscript, Hunter College of the City University of New York, September 1978. P. 9.

Evaluation should include program modification. Evaluation is relatively superfluous if no adjustments are eventually made in the programs evaluated. Our model is a component of the planning and operation of programs. It has a cyclical feature. First, a program is designed and implemented with the overall purpose of preparing "good teachers." Next, data are collected on the effectiveness of the program and a written report is given to the program faculty. The faculty then meet with administrative planners to modify the program--deficiencies are corrected, good points strengthened, and new aspects introduced where indicated. At that point the cycle begins again.

Evaluation should be field-based. It is not enough to evaluate whether a program operates as designed, for the design may have little relevance to a graduate's performance in the schools. Similarly, a program might well achieve its objective but the achievement may have little importance to users in the field--the schools may need something else. Therefore we first find out what principals, supervisors and other field personnel think is important to good teaching. Our graduates are evaluated from this field perspective--not solely from the program's perspective. The gap between program and field is reduced. For example, faculty have to take into account the perceptions of principals and graduates concerning what makes for good teaching and how effective the program has been in preparing teachers from that point of view. It should not be overlooked that any adjustment of faculty perceptions and values itself constitutes program modification of a significant and powerful kind.

Evaluation should be longitudinal. To assess program impace on students, the same group of students must be followed from entry through exit and into some years of employment. A common deficiency in evaluation designs has been to collect data only on graduates, and then to attribute

to the program whatever characteristics are found in graduates. Another deficiency has been to compare entering and graduating students, and then to attribute the differences between these groups to the program --as if one and the same group had been surveyed from start to finish. We collect data from all education students over a 3-5 year span, at these points: (1) at entry; (2) at exit, after completion of student teaching; and (3) after one or two years of teaching experience. On the basis of these data, we can make more reliable inferences about program impact.

Evaluation should include <u>all personnel</u> related to a program. Typically, an evaluation design will include only the graduates, and perhaps the faculty. With our field-based and longitudinal strategy, we include personnel in the field (teaching graduates, their principals and supervisors) and in the program (faculty and students at various stages). This feature provides a wealth of useful information. For one, we can detect program impact at various groups; for instance, we can know the emphasis put on classroom discipline by faculty, by principals, and by graduates.

Evaluation should be based on <u>reliable and comprehensive</u> information. Many evaluation designs suffer from technical deficiencies which result in unreliable data. In that case, faculty and planners can easily--and rightly--dispute or dismiss findings based on faulty methods of data collection and analysis. Our faculty have confidence in the data because they know it is technically defensible. Five features are important here. First, as noted, the data are longitudinal. Second, data are collected from all participants; for instance, <u>all</u> teaching graduates are contacted, not merely a restricted or haphazard sample. Third, contact with graduates (and principals) is by personal, face-to-face interview, thus eliminating

the problem of interpreting results from written and mailed surveys with a 30-60% return. We learn a lot in these interviews that we could not have learned from a questionnaire. Fourth, data are stored, retrieved, and analyzed by computer methods, and instruments are so constructed that appropriate statistical techniques may be used, as for instance tests of statistical significance. A final feature is that the data are comprehensive. Not only do all participants in all groups provide data, but also the data cover a wide variety of areas. For example, the educational values of participants are examined; the characteristics of the school and surrounding community are surveyed; student characteristics not related to the program are included, such as age, sex, and GPA.

Evaluation should examine <u>importance</u> as well as effectiveness. In some way, the values that people hold influence their behavior. Teachers hold certain values about education that influence their behavior in the classroom; program faculty too hold values that influence the design and operation of the program; and school principals hold values that influence the way they run their school. To evaluate a program only on the basis of its effectiveness omits two crucial issues: (a) how important is it? and (b) from whose perspective? Our design centers on the educational values held by all involved in a program. For example, we obtain descriptors of "good teaching" from school principals. Students, faculty, and principals then rate each of these descriptors according to how important it is, relative to the other descriptors, to good teaching. This information gives a sense of the valued importance given to any item by the various groups. We can then match this information with the ratings that each group makes on program effectiveness. As a result, we can know not only

that the program is rated ineffective on such-and-such an item (e.g., teacher-pupil relationship) but we also know how important that item is and from whose perspective. It is a common finding, for instance, that principals rate a program highly effective on some item they think is relatively unimportant; or that on something the faculty thinks is very important the program is rated relatively ineffective. In consequence, the program can be adjusted so as to become more effective on the more important things. Furthermore, the design allows us to see shifts in student values over time, and to examine whether these shifts can be attributed to faculty or program influence, or to influence of field-experience (student teaching, beginning employment)--or perhaps to other characteristics of the students themselves (maturation, sex, etc.).

The Model in Operation

The evaluation office operates full-time during a 12-month year. During each academic year the office continually collects data on all students in all programs, but concentrates on evaluating only three or four programs.

Calendar

During each term, we collect and analyze data from all entering and exiting students in education. For entering students, we visit all sections of the introductory course during the first week or so of the term. For exiting students, we visit the last meeting or so of the final seminar at end of term. While this process continues, we follow a separate schedule for the programs chosen for evaluation.

During the fall, we meet with the faculty of the program and inform ourselves about its objectives, activities, personnel, and so forth. Then

we establish a particular evaluation design, adjusting the instruments to be used and devising statistical techniques appropriate to the population. Concurrently we locate the graduates, relying on computerized payroll or other personnel lists provided by State and Chicago boards. We then telephone the principals, arrange for a site visitation and send a follow-up letter with details.

During the winter, we visit the schools. We interview the graduates and their supervisors, and obtain their written responses to various instruments. We write up the interviews and encode the data for computer storage. We try to complete the visitation phase three weeks prior to school closing.

During late spring and summer, we analyze the data, write the report, and send it to the faculty.

During early fall, we meet with the faculty and review the findings. Thereafter the faculty, together with administrative personnel, make program modifications as indicated, we assist in this activity but do not direct or implement it.

At that point we are already involved in evaluating other programs for the new year.

Instruments

Without entering into detail, we can describe in a general way the instruments used for evaluation.

From 50 area principals we have obtained lists of descriptors of "good teaching." These give us the perspective of the field, by contrast to the program. Through appropriate techniques we have derived a list of 15 descriptors--for example, subject-matter mastery, class discipline, teacher-

pupil relationship.

These descriptors are given to all personnel in the field (graduates and principals, etc.) and in the program (students and faculty). They rank the importance of each item, relative to all others, for good teaching. With this information we can make such comparisons as: Who thinks what is how important? And we can make such inferences as: Student values shift in this direction as a result of that influence.

Another instrument assesses the underlying orientation used in ranking the descriptors. From what perspective are these choices made? The individual indicates that a certain item is important from the point of view that it is professionally correct, or personally satisfying, or pragmatically useful, etc.

A fourth instrument assesses program effectiveness. The basis for the ratings is not the objectives of the program but the descriptors of good teaching.

For interviewing principals and teaching graduates, we follow a flexible format of five questions. Principals also complete a questionnaire rating the facilities of their school, and the evaluator completes a check list on the surrounding community.

For obtaining data on student characteristics not related to the program (e.g., age, sex, GPA), we rely on university records. Data are retrieved through the use of social security numbers.

Personnel & Budget

Among the attractions of this model is that it uses very few personnel, very little money and small other resources. The office itself is cramped, and contains four persons: the Director (Dr. Stanley Starkman), a professional assistant, a clerk-typist and a part-time student aide. The two professionals

alone survey all students, visit all schools, and interview all graduates and principals.

The total operating budget for educational evaluation is just under fifty-thousand dollars for the 1978-79 fiscal year. Budget categories are as follows:

Personnel	$48,196
Travel	200
Commodities	900
Contractual	650
Equipment	-0-
Total	$49,946

The remaining cost is for computer usage (approximately $5500), which is charged against a general university account and not assigned by unit budget. No fees are collected, no contributions made by departments. All monies are from state appropriations.

Evaluation

The two principal sources of evaluation for this model are peer review and the very process itself. In the process of applying the model, we have to explain and adjust its workings for a wide critical audience. Deficiencies are quickly spotted and must be remedied to the satisfaction of those involved, lest the process lose the respect of participants and consequently lose its effect. Moreover, in applying the model to a variety of programs we must make continual adjustments to accommodate the varying emphases of each. Flexibility characterizes the model by reason of its field-based and value-oriented features. As needs in the field change, so do perceptions and hence also our program efforts and evaluation techniques.

Among the results of evaluation are a new conceptualization and instrument for the assessment of value-orientations. Through a refinement in statistical technique we have also revised the list of descriptors of good teaching.

Reactions

The reaction of participants has been uniformly positive, not to say enthusiastic. We find that surprising but true. Everyone seems to take to the evaluation. Moreover, here on campus there is a noticeable sentiment of pride in the model. While few people probably know the details or appreciate the technical qualities, there is a widespread feeling that we have "a good thing" here. The model served us dramatically during the NCATE accreditation process and again during the review for State approval. It further serves each time a new program is designed and submitted for approval, for an evaluation component stands ready to hand. At this general level, expressions of praise and satisfaction are heard fairly frequently--from the President and other administrators, and from individual faculty members.

Faculty cooperation in the evaluation process is superb. Faculty willingly devote entire class periods for our visits. There has never been a problem, never a balk, in obtaining this cooperation. Individual faculty have described the reports we send them as thoughtful, provocative, useful, and stimulating. Perhaps one great advantage is that the evaluation process is perceived as non-threatening to individual faculty. The design centers on program and groups; no individual course or instructor is publicly pinpointed. Another advantage may be that our reports are treated as strictly confidential; controlled copies are sent only to the faculty of the program under evaluation, and one copy to the Dean. Discussion of the report takes

place within the program or department. A third advantage is that evaluation personnel do not tell faculty what to do. The personnel join in only to the extent of explaining the report and indicating permissible interpretations of the findings. The faculty draw appropriate conclusions and consider appropriate adjustments in the program.

School personnel show themselves as cooperative as faculty, and probably more enthusiastic. Their reaction continues to impress us deeply. To gain entry into the schools, we have to date contacted about 35 district superintendents and 150 school principals. Of all these, only a single principal has refused cooperation (understandably, perhaps, as this principal had been in office a mere three weeks at the time). As far as we can see, our visits and interviews give these educators an opportunity which they very much want--to give their reactions about teacher training; to provide suggestive information that might improve teacher education; to be taken into consideration. Principals, chairpersons, and other supervisors appear appreciative and flattered. Our teaching graduates share these sentiments. It is amazing to find people anxious to express their views about improving a program with which they have little personal involvement; we often sit for two hours and more to hear the concerns of a single person. Moreover, other people in the school will seek us out during the visit, as for example graduates of other programs not under evaluation at the time. These favorable reactions confirm in our mind the usefulness of building into an evaluation model a means for systematic communication between program and field.

The incidental effects of the evaluation process are notable. A great deal of goodwill and cooperation comes about, useful for recruiting

and public relations as well as for professional collegiality. The institution can learn of current needs in the schools and can become more responsive to them. (This is a criterion for State approval.) Graduates can see that their alma mater still is concerned for them, feels responsible for the enduring effects--not merely the present operation--of its programs, and invites their newly-professional help in efforts to improve teacher education and performance. Other positive effects could be noted, all incidental to the purposes of evaluation but considerably fruitful in other respects.

Implications

Apart from its direct contribution to teacher education, this model has implications for other instructional and research efforts. Research prospects relate, in the main, to issues in the specialized field of evaluation and will not be described here. But it can be noted that this model represents an appreciable advance in the conception and practice of educational evaluation.

As for instruction, the model is both comprehensive enough and flexible enough to be applied to programs other than education. One significant development in most fields is the growing emphasis on providing students with supervised pre-professional practice in the form of internships, practica, or other clinical and field experiences. These experiences are being mandated or recommended by accrediting and certifying agencies as well as by professional associations. Accompanying such mandates is the typical requirement that the program have an evaluation component or otherwise undergo evaluation. With a model such as ours well-established on campus, each program can have recourse to evaluation without having to develop and implement a design at

every turn. A similar requirement and advantage applies in the case of non-programmatic proposals and projects that are funded by outside agencies. Such developments ultimately enhance the education unit, whose evaluation skills should be emphasized and nurtured in these days of uncertainty over enrollments, programs, and resources.

We are glad to share, for the asking, any of the benefits we have achieved through our model. We want to contribute to the improvement of teacher education whether on this campus or in other settings.

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